

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**

**COMS 363 (L01) Professional and Technical Communication**

**Winter 2020: January 13 – April 15 (excluding February 16-22 & April 10 & 13)**

**Online Course (no lectures or labs)**

**Instructor:** Dr. Monique Solomon  
**Office:** SS254  
**Email:** solomonm@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** D2L available through MyUofC portal  
**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays 11 am to 12 noon

**Course Description**

COMS 363 is an introductory course in professional and technical communication. The course emphasizes the rhetorical dimensions and distinct organizational and socio-cultural contexts of the workplace. In the course students will gain knowledge of and apply best practices in planning, researching, composing, and delivering professional and technical communications materials for various audiences. Through individual and group writing assignments students will learn concepts and skills enabling them to assess and respond in various workplace writing situations.

**Additional Information**

This course is offered entirely online on D2L via MyUofC. To be successful in the course students should schedule 4 - 5 hours per week for completing readings and assignments. Students are encouraged to check D2L and their '@ucalgary.ca' email regularly for course updates and information.

**Objectives of the Course**

This course will help students develop...

- a rhetorical approach to crafting documents, which involves critical consideration of purpose, audience, and relevant features of context
- familiarity with conventions and composition strategies for a range of written genres, including presentations and reports
- writing and editing strategies to keep writing focused, coherent, and readable
- familiarity with search tools for online research, composition, and collaborative writing
- competence in preparing PowerPoint presentations
- competence using APA documentation style

**Textbooks and Readings**

Meyer, C. (2017). *Communicating for Results: A Canadian Student's Guide*. Fourth Edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Students may use either the print or online version of the textbook. Additional course material will be posted on D2L throughout the course.

## Email Policy

- **Include COMS 363 in the subject line of all email sent to your professor.** Include your name in the body of the email as it appears in your university registration.
- **Email is best used for short specific inquiries.** If you have detailed questions about the course material or assignments, please make an appointment to meet with your professor in-person.
- **Email will be answered weekdays during regular working hours.** You can generally expect an answer within 24 hours. Email will not usually be answered evenings or weekends. Email will not be answered on Sundays.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments - Additional details for assignments will be posted on D2L.	Weight	Due
<b>Online Quizzes (Individual Assignment) 3 x 10% = 30%</b> Students complete three online quizzes covering chapters in the textbook. These open-book quizzes will have 25 multiple-choice questions and students have 90 minutes to complete the quiz. Quiz 1: Chapters 1-5, Quiz 2: Chapters 6-10, Quiz 3: Chapters 11-14. Please note when quizzes are closed they will not be reopened.	10% 10% 10%	Quiz 1 February 6-7 Quiz 2 March 5-6 Quiz 3 April 2-3
<b>Introductory Memo (Individual Assignment)</b> Students write a 500-word memo. Topic provided.	5%	January 31
<b>Writing Portfolio (Individual Assignment)</b> Students work at their own pace to prepare a writing portfolio comprised of five (5) short textbook chapter exercises (between 150-750 words each). The exercises will be drawn from textbook chapters and posted on D2L the second week of term. Each exercise is weighted at five points. The full set of five exercises is to be completed and formatted as a writing portfolio weighted at an additional 5 points. With this assignment students practice writing skills (conciseness, clarity, style, attention to context), locate and assess information, and learn to prepare a portfolio.	30%	March 20
<b>Formal Report (25%) &amp; Presentation (10%) (Small Group Assignment)</b> Self-forming groups of 3 - 4 students will research and prepare a formal recommendation report (2500 words) and Power Point presentation (8-12 slides). Topic provided on D2L after Quiz 1.	35%	April 15

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** No

## Submission of Assignments

You must complete all assignments or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. Please note when quizzes are closed they will not be reopened.

Follow assignment instructions carefully. Assignments are due via upload to D2L (.doc, .docx, or .pdf) on the due date stated on the course outline, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Please include your name and ID number on all assignments AND include your name in the file name of all documents uploaded to D2L.

If you are unable to upload to D2L, and unable to provide your instructor with a printed copy in-person please use the drop box in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

**Note:** It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the correct version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments in SS 320. Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act***. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

**Policy for Late Assignments:** Assignments submitted after due dates (deadline) may be penalized with the loss of a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

### **Student Accommodations**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/). Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

### **Expectations for Writing**

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

### **Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale**

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade. In this course, final grades are reported as letter grades. Course work is graded using a combination of letter grades and numerical

scores. The memo assignment, formal report and report presentation slides are graded using letter grades, while numeric scores will be converted to percentages for the writing portfolio and quizzes.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
<b>4.00</b>	Outstanding performance	<b>A+</b>	96 - 100%	98.0%
<b>4.00</b>	Excellent performance	<b>A</b>	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
<b>3.70</b>	Approaching excellent performance	<b>A -</b>	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
<b>3.30</b>	Exceeding good performance	<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
<b>3.00</b>	Good performance	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
<b>2.70</b>	Approaching good performance	<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>	Exceeding satisfactory performance	<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory performance	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>	Approaching satisfactory performance	<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	0 - 49.99%	0%

\* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

## Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/resources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html)

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To

book an appointment, go to [https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm\\_source=ssc&utm\\_medium=redirect&utm\\_campaign=redirect](https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect)

### **Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation**

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright ([www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf)) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

### **Academic Misconduct**

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Research Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

### **Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal**

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

### **Student Support Services and Resources**

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at [itsupport@ucalgary.ca](mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca) or by calling 403-220.5555.

### **Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings**

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found on the course D2L.